



City of Madison Heights

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September 7, 2016

The Honorable Lee Chatfield
Chair House Local Government Committee
Anderson House Office Building
Post Office Box 30014
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Dear Chairman Chatfield:

As mayor of the City of Madison Heights, I am writing to ask for your support of Senate Bill 239.

Senate Bill 239 maintains local control and regulation over the behavior of dogs and their owners. Indeed, the bill encourages local governments to strengthen their laws, as they focus on the root cause of the problem. Dangerous dogs of all breeds should be restrained and restricted. The passage of Senate Bill 239 will allow local governments to retain control and to regulate reckless owners, who cause so many of the problems we see in our communities.

Breed discrimination laws that SB 239 would effectively extinguish are based on myth, fear and emotion. As policymakers, we know that effective laws are based on facts and science. The facts and the science are overwhelmingly clear on this topic. Breed discrimination does not improve public safety and can actually have the opposite effect by focusing public safety on dogs that have done nothing wrong but that look a certain way, taking our eye off the overall issue of dog owner mismanagement and irresponsible ownership of any and all dogs.

Every citizen who follows the law and is a responsible dog owner should be allowed to own whatever breed of dog they choose, without arbitrary government restrictions.

Breed specific ordinances at the local level are ineffective, costly, and distract from where true attention and resources should be focused, on the enforcement of laws and ordinances that hold pet owners accountable for the pet's behavior – regardless of breed.

Thank you for your time. Please vote in support of Senate Bill 239.

Sincerely,
Brian Hartwell
Mayor of Madison Heights, Michigan